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A CANADA WORKS PROJECT PROPOSAL

for an

EMPLOYMENT RE-ENTRY PROJECT

February, 1977

THE SOCIAL PLANNING and RESEARCH COUNCIL of Hamilton and District

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I. THE PROGRAM

The program is designed to assist those recipients of Family Benefits who wish to re-enter the work force but who find the variety of problems encountered in the transition prohibitive. Basically, the program proposes both a workshop approach staffed by recipients of Family Benefits and an individualized support system which will involve matching volunteers with participants in the program.

The workshops will focus on the dilemmas to be faced in deciding whether to work or remain in receipt of Family Benefits; on assessing marketable skills and employment alternatives; on entering upgrading or retraining programs; on job search techniques and job placement and on adjusting to a new role. The format for the workshops could include the utilization of such resources as films, books, role playing, video-taping and guest speakers. Staff positions for the workshops will be selected from Family Benefit recipients who apply for the positions.

In conjunction with the workshop approach and in recognition of the need for individualized support throughout the period of transition from a dependent to an independent role a one-to-one relationship between participants and volunteers will be fostered. The volunteers will not only offer support throughout the job preparation and placement period but will continue offering their support, as long as required, after employment is secured.

(a) Workshop #1: To Work or Not To Work?

Before the participant can begin the job-hunt he/she must deal with the many issues and problems involved with the decision to re-enter the work force. Such issues may include:

(i) being a parent and having a job

(ii) how to manage the best use of time

(iii) family reaction to change in status

(iv) loss of special benefits

(v) transportation, child care, lack of support, fatigue

Once the participant feels comfortable with the decision to return to work he/she must decide what type of employment he/she is interested in. The workshop leader will conduct general group discussions on such issues as how to assess your skills; how to market those years of work experience in the home; information on upgrading and retraining programs; information on day care services; and traditional and non-traditional employment. The volunteer could help the individual determine his/her work aspirations and how these realistically relate to his/her skills and experience.

The purpose of the first workshop is to clarify and deal with the issues and problems resulting from the decision to return to work. A considerable amount of time during this workshop will be spent in determining realistic employment goals and aspirations. The volunteers will assist the participant realize his/her individual employment aspirations and potential Staff, volunteer and participant should work cooperatively.

(b) Workshop #2: The Job Search

While the first workshop deals with the problems to be encountered during the transition to independence, the second workshop focuses on job preparation and placement needs. Issues to be discussed include how to effectively and efficiently seek employment,

utilization of employment services, such as Canada Manpower Centers, Citizen Action Group and private agencies, will be discussed and encouraged. As the second workshop is concerned with the job-hunt another aspect to include is learning how to scrutinize newspaper employment want-ads and finding potential employers through telephone directory yellow-page listings. Application forms are an important part of the job-hunt. The workshop will examine sample employment application forms to facilitate an understanding of the forms and how an employer uses them. Staff and participants could respond to answers completed by the participants on sample forms.

Employment interviews can be frightening experiences. If the participants are prepared for the interviews and how to 'market' their skills and abilities, the interview may not present a barrier to employment. Employers might be invited to address the group and explain employer expectations during an interview. Role-playing and video-taping might also be beneficial tools in this session of the workshop.

The purpose of the second workshop not only includes preparation for the competitive job market but also assistance with job placement. Guest speakers from various employment services (including Canada Manpower Centers and Citizen Action Group) may explain the function and utility of their services and perhaps become a liaison person at the agency for project participants. Representatives from major employers might be invited to speak to the group regarding the employer's perspective of the job market and of the employment needs in their industry. Those participants who chose to enter upgrading

or re-training programs will have the option of participating in the second workshop. The information will help them in the future. They might choose to participate in the second workshop at a later date, after completion of their courses.

The participants could share their experiences during a group discussion period. In this approach the group becomes self-help oriented. Through the process of sharing experiences and feedback the participants will realize that they all encounter similar problems.

While the staff prepare the participants for the competitive job-market the volunteer could offer support and enthusiasm during the job search. Volunteers should be completely aware of the nature and objectives of the workshops. If it appeared beneficial the volunteer could accompany the participant to an interview and then offer feedback. The volunteer could work with the participant in organizing his/her job search plans. Arranging interviews in one area of the city during one day is an example of a task the volunteer could help the participant with. The volunteer, then, assists the individual plan his/her job search so that it is both efficient and effective. Support and encouragement from the volunteer would be beneficial to both the participant and his/her family. For those participants who choose to enter upgrading or retraining the volunteer will be able to offer similar support, especially in helping the family cope with the participant's new role.

(c) Follow-Through Contact

The final phase of the program is perhaps the most vital in terms of job maintenance. Follow-through contact by the volunteer is designed to avoid job-loss due to misunderstanding of employment procedures. It may also be necessary for the volunteer to help the participant and his/her family adjust to this change of status and the dual responsibilities of employment and family. The volunteer and participant should agree on the necessity for continuing or terminating the follow-through contact. For the purpose of project evaluation, however, the minimum requirement of staff would be one contact a month for three months. Staff should record difficulties experienced and whether the participant remained employed.

II. STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES

(a) Project Manager (one position)

The project manager will be responsible for all the administrative duties, including staff supervision. It is appropriate, therefore, that the minimum qualifications required for this position be a social service diploma. Selection of the individual for this position will be the responsibility of the Social Planning and Research Council and the Y.W.C.A. as these organizations are sponsoring the project. The project manager will be accountable to these organizations.

The Social Planning and Research Council will provide staff time on a consultative basis for the project manager. As the project manager will be responsible for staff training and development; and

as staff will have recently left a dependent-role as a recipient of Family Benefits, the manager will require support in this role. The Community Employment Strategy (C.E.S.) Advisory Committee, of the Social Planning and Research Council, endorses the project and will provide support and consultation as required by the manager. Members of the C.E.S. Advisory Committee include Jon Buttrum, Executive Director of Citizen's Action Group; Mike Dwyer, Basic Job Readiness Training; and Terry Cassidy, Director of Project L.O.N.A.R.

Project staff will be hired and supervised by the project manager. After staff selection has been completed, the manager will assist project staff in designing and setting up the workshops.

The participants will be referred by local F.B.A. recipient groups and agencies serving this population. The manager will be responsible for establishing a cooperative working relationship with these groups and organizations.

The manager will also be required to establish cooperative relationships with relevant community services and agencies, such as Canada Manpower Centers and Citizen's Action Group.

(b) Workshop Staff (four positions)

Workshop staff will be hired by the manager in consultation with the advisory staff from S.P.R.C. The staff will be chosen from F.B.A. recipients who apply for the job. Advertisements will be sent to the local F.B.A. recipient groups and community agencies who serve this population.

Two positions per workshop are required to provide the close contact required by the participants. Workshop staff will also be required to obtain all resource material prior to operation of the workshop.

Workshop staff will work with the project manager to design the daily functions and activities of the workshop. A concrete program will be determined before participants begin the program. Organizing resource materials and guest speakers will be the responsibility of workshop staff. Throughout each workshop session the workshop staff should develop trust and rapport with the participants and be flexible with the programming so as to ensure the participants' needs are being met.

Once the workshop programs have been developed and prior to the first workshop session for participants it may be extremely beneficial for staff to participate in the workshops. In this way some problems or gaps could be spotted prior to the actual running of the workshops. Another advantage of this trial-run is a deeper understanding by all staff of the nature of the workshop program. The trial-run of the workshops will serve as a supplementary training session for the staff.

At the conclusion of each workshop session the workshop staff will be responsible for writing a progress report on the operation of that workshop session. Recommendations should be discussed with the manager and, if accepted, adapted to the next workshop session.

(c) Volunteer Coordinator (one position)

Selection of the volunteer coordinator will be the responsibility of the manager in consultation with the advisory staff from S.P.R.C. The volunteer coordinator will be selected from interested recipients of Family Benefits.

The volunteer coordinator will be responsible for recruitment of volunteers. He/she should be able to use a lot of initiatives in the recruitment function. Some ideas for sources of potential volunteers include F.B.A. recipients - F.B.A. recipients who wish to volunteer may be ideal as they will understand the conflicts and difficulties faced by the participants; service clubs; workers in industries - especially those industries which hire participants as the volunteer could provide a direct on-going relationship with a deeper understanding of the employer's expectations; and community volunteers.

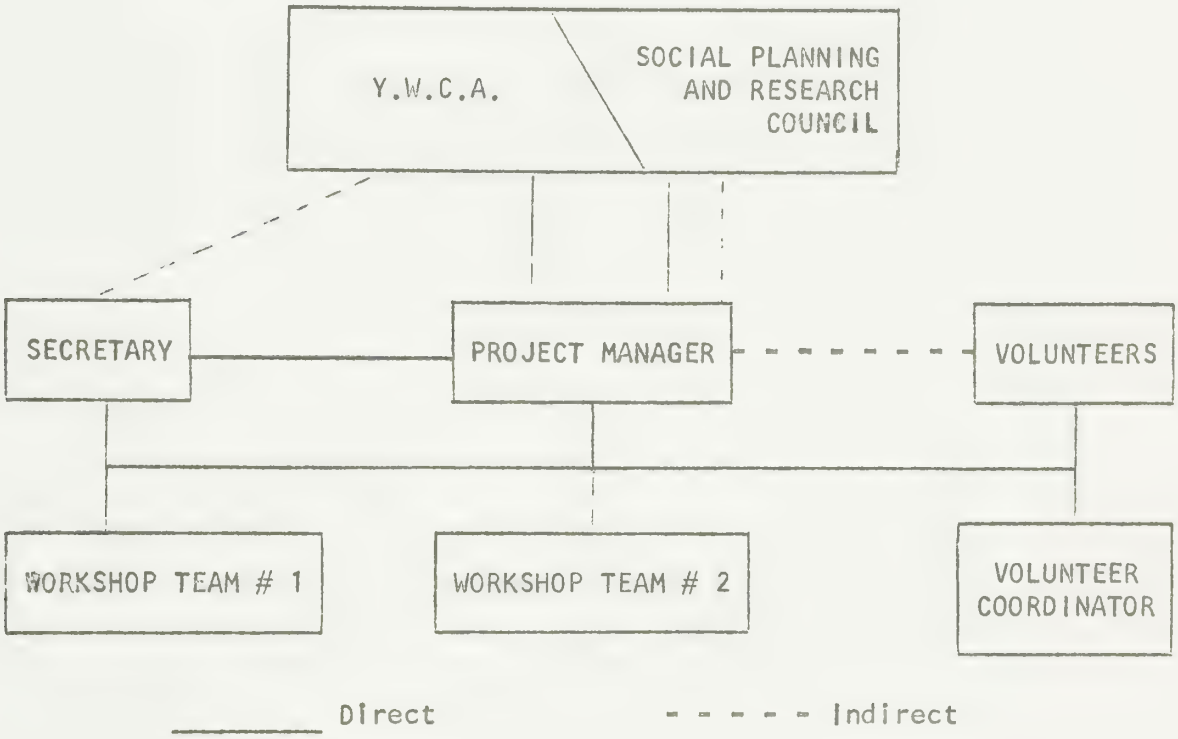
The coordinator might also set up a job bank bulletin board for the participants. Want-ads from the daily newspapers could be posted and listed into categories for easy scrutiny by the participant. If the volunteers are aware of available jobs they could pass them on the job bank bulletin board. The volunteers could help the participants use the job bank bulletin board as another resource in their job search.

(d) Secretary (one position)

The hiring procedure for this position will be similar to that of the workshop staff and volunteer coordinator. All clerical needs

will be the responsibility of the secretary. The most important duty of the secretary will be keeping the communication flow open between community resources and the staff, thus, the secretary's receptionist duties will be important. Assisting the volunteer coordinator in maintaining an up-to-date job bank bulletin board could be another function of the secretary.

(c) Organizational Chart



III. PROJECT EVALUATION

The first workshop includes the establishment of realistic goals by the participants. A goal attainment scaling evaluative procedure is suited to this project. The project manager, in consultation with S.P.R.C. staff could set this procedure up with the participants.

In addition, each participant will be asked to complete an employability assessment rating scale prior to and at the completion of the workshops. This procedure will monitor any changes in the participants' employability. Staff could assess the effects of the workshops on employability.

Both the workshop staff and all participants will be asked to submit written reports of their subjective evaluations after every workshop. This reporting procedure will be beneficial in terms of identifying needed changes or alterations in the workshop format.

Through the utilization of the subjective reports in conjunction with the goal attainment scaling evaluative procedure the project will be evaluated on an on-going and completion basis.

February 3rd, 1977

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